

Communications.

TO PITTSBURG AND BACK.

One of the best uses of travel abroad is to gain content with home. The Philadelphian who goes to Pittsburg is not unlikely to learn that lesson so far as his outward surroundings are concerned. A moderate amount of smoking, indeed, gives a place a warm, home-like air, softening glaring tints and suggesting a long growth of years, in which human affections had grown to the place. But the deluge of smoke in Pittsburg proper goes beyond all moderation, and suggests the anxious inquiry whether the whole people will not wake up some morning and find themselves smothered. And Pittsburg's smoke is not her worst defect. Her whole municipal policy is of such a utilitarian type that the city possesses few claims on the attention of the ordinary traveller. The finest street is given over to wholesale merchants and the locomotive. Another important street was originally laid out with due width, but narrowed to an alley in the actual building in order to spare the corn crop of an early settler. The place has no promenade street, no public parks, no galleries of art, no museums of science, no fine public halls, no objects of historical interest.

The only attractive things in Pittsburg are the Pittsburgers. They are such a cheerful, ready, helpful, cordial people, that you feel in them a greater contrast to frigid Philadelphia than their streets present. The bearing of the public, and in public places, at once shows that you have got to a place where that respectable body, the Society of Friends, have not laid the foundations of society. I did not see a Quaker dress in all my visits to the city.

Allentown City, across the river, is not near so smoky as its neighbor, with which it refuses to be consolidated. A bequest to the town has furnished and secured to it two large parks, which are now in course of laying out, and will, doubtless, add much to its beauty and attractiveness. It is mainly a city of residences, as it contains no extensive manufacturing or wholesale stores. It is also fast becoming a city of churches, as quite a number have been erected. The First U. P. church (Dr. Presley's), have erected a massive and imposing edifice of brick, trimmed with stone. The Old Covenant church have put up a smaller, but still very pretty edifice, quite near by. They have recently called to the pastorate a young Mr. Willson, whose father was long and well known in our own city, as pastor of the Cherry Street church (Rev. T. P. Stevenson's), until he went to Allegheny as professor in their Theological Seminary. The son had intended to enter the law, and had advanced to some extent in his studies, when, finding that he must choose between his Church and his profession (as he must swear allegiance to the United States before practicing in any court of law), he decided rather to remain an "anti-burgher" non-juring Covenanter, and to enter the ministry. He is a young man of decided ability, and (like not a few in that body), illustrates John Stuart Mill's saying, that next to those who lead the van of the age, the strongest minds are found bringing up the rear.

Prof. Sproull, the former pastor of the church, retires in consequence of Synodic legislation requiring professors to devote their whole time to their chairs. A very strong effort was made to secure the election of his son in preference to Mr. Willson, and some very questionable measures adopted to that end. Two young ladies were refused the privilege of voting as church members, because they had gone to hear a relative preach in a church of another denomination. This "occasional hearing" was, indeed, a censurable offence in old times, and in old Dr. Black's church in Pittsburg, a member and his wife were required to express repentance for having paused at the door of a Seceder church on their way home from their own church, and thereby heard part of the preacher's "xvithly my brethren." But we had supposed the rule finally abandoned by all but the Lusk and Steelite Reformed Presbyteries, who still proclaim the bans in marriage, line out the Psalms two lines at a time, and forbid their members to associate with those of other Churches for any moral purpose. Among the Covenanters of the Synod (O. S.) the old rule was first broken through with impunity in this very church by the students who were expected to wait on Dr. Sproull's ministrations. In our city it came to an end when the young people persisted in going to hear Mr. Guin-

ness on week-day evenings with such obstinacy and frequency, and in such numbers as rendered discipline of no effect.

The First R. P. church of Allegheny city had an accession of twelve at their last communion, among whom was Mrs. Jane G. Swisshelm, the well-known advocate of social reforms. Mrs. Swisshelm was brought up in the First R. P. church of Pittsburg, but left it when the present pastor (Dr. Douglass) succeeded Dr. Black. The latter taught her anti-slavery doctrine. At the communion he used to "debar all horse-thieves, slave-owners and all other dishonest persons,"—a fact which she once mentioned in a company of Radicals who were denouncing the Church in wholesale terms for its complicity with slavery.

What the future of this congregation will be in its higher ecclesiastical connections is hard to say. As it adheres to the Pittsburg Reformed Presbytery in suspending relations to the General Synod, some score of the members have withdrawn, and the Douglass Presbytery have recognized them as the true First R. P. church of Allegheny, and have transmitted papers in advocacy of the same claim to Synod. It is not impossible that the future of the church and its pastor will be such as to furnish a favorable opportunity for the establishment of a New School church in the city, if the local authorities are not backward to avail themselves of the opportunity.

The Pittsburg Presbytery (N. S.) is certainly lengthening its cords and strengthening its stakes. I was permitted to be present at a part of the recent *pro re nata* session in the study of the Third church, and to renew my acquaintance with J. S. T. and Mr. Noble, and to witness the reception of a Third Free church into its connection.

The Free Church movement was one which deserved to be described more fully than it ever has been. It arose (as all know) among the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of Western Pennsylvania and Ohio, who were wearied of the endless compromises and tergiversation of the General Assemblies, (especially the O. S. Assembly) in regard to the sin of slavery, but were not ready to adopt the peculiarities of the minor anti-slavery bodies of Presbyterians.

In Beaver, Pa., and in Lowellville just across the Ohio border the work of withdrawal and organization began. In Newcastle we find one of its strongest branches. Attempts were made by the anti-slavery, Psalm-singing Churches to rally the Free churchmen around their own banner. That these failed (we believe) is largely owing to a deceased minister of the R. P. Church—Rev. Riley M. Millan, who by a series of articles in *The Free Church Portfolio* refuted the claims put forward as to the scriptural and historical authority of an exclusive psalmody.

When the Assemblies in 1857, and at the beginning of the war, took ground on the Slavery question that could not be mistaken, the necessity for a Free Church ceased to exist. The last meeting of their ecclesiastical court was in Lowellville, O., and there and then the body formally dissolved. The Newcastle church joined the Presbytery of Pittsburg, and is now united with the R. P. church in the pastoral charge of Rev. W. T. Wylie. The Hopewell church joined the N. S. Presbytery more recently, and has been in charge of the Rev. J. F. Hill of the Ref. Presbytery. Mr. Hill has also extended his labors to the Free church in Lowellville, over the Ohio border, where he found that the infidelity introduced by some Abolitionist lecturers (Abby Kelly, &c.) had borne its bitter fruit in the general recklessness and immorality of the place. Besides the Free church only a very weak Methodist church now exists here, and the Free church had not had any regular ministrations in the Gospel for a year past. An attempt made to establish an O. S. church had proved a failure. The U. Presbyterians were anxious to unite two of their churches which lie at about equal distance on each side of the town, and to buy out the Free church property. The latter, however, preferred to retain their organization and name, and voted with (two exceptions) to place themselves under the care of the N. S. Presbytery of Pittsburg.

Elder M. Farland represented them at the recent meeting of Presbytery, and gave great satisfaction by his plain, straight-forward statement of the facts. Mr. Hill was also to be received at the meeting of the R. Presbytery, and will doubtless retain the charge of both churches. ON THE WING.

GEOLOGY AT A DISCOUNT.*

Strange, strange! This "Exact" science, this science founded upon the immovable basis of fact, this "natural" science whose laws were immutable, this science that bristled with so many points of hard and exact reasoning against the dim and shadowy speculations of religion, this science must at last acknowledge that its exactness is but a dream, that its basis of fact has slipped from beneath it, that the immutability of its laws is but a baseless pretence. Geology is at a discount. Here the geologists, great and small, have been these many years attempting to cast discredit on the Mosaic account of creation, because there was nothing in that account that seemed to favor the theory of the igneous formation of what these gentlemen have termed the "primary strata;" because, on the other hand, there were some things that seemed to bear against the theory. It mattered not at all that it was said that Moses does not teach geology, that he simply announces the fact that this universe of matter was created by the Almighty, without attempting to describe the process. It was of no consequence to say that the Mosaic account does not conflict with scientific theories, for it does not teach science. No. Geology, they said, stands on a basis of fixed fact. It consequently can speak with more authority than that collection of mere speculative opinions which is called the Bible. Geology has discovered that the earth is "a globe of liquid fire, contained within a very thin crust." The foundation of that crust, they continued, is composed of granite and kindred rocks, and these have taken their origin in the cooling of this fiery mass. But the Bible says nothing about the igneous origin and character of the earth. It even says: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." So up goes geology with its "fixed facts," and down comes the Bible with its crude myths. It is Murchison against Moses, geology against Genesis. And science, men seem to think, has the better of it, for it speaks with authority!

But lo! a change! From a series of independent investigations, conducted by different observers, it is found that the old theory is all wrong. It is proved that granite is not of igneous but of aqueous origin, that "it is not a metal, but a mortar." In fact feldspar, one of the main constituents of granite, has actually been manufactured by the water process. Sir Charles Lyell has been obliged to assert that "various experiments have led to the conclusion that the minerals which enter most largely into the composition of the metamorphic rocks have not been formed by crystallizing from a state of fusion, or in the dry way, but that they have been derived from liquid solutions, or in the wet way—a process requiring a far less degree of heat."

What then? Here the geologists have been abusing the "author of the Hebrew myths," because forsooth he did not describe the Almighty as forming a ball of molten granite when in the beginning He created the heavens and the earth. But it turns out now that such was not the description, for the very good reason that there never was such a substance. Granite will not melt; its crystals decompose, and the mass becomes lighter in the fire, as is the case with all clayey substances. Will the geologists, great and small, acknowledge their error? They must accept the scientific fact. But will they be honest enough to confess their sin against the Divine Word? Will they acknowledge that an antagonism to the Bible because it does not square with their theories is foolish in the extreme? Will they learn by humiliating experience that the students of physical science are the last men that ought to dogmatize; that they are, after all, only students, searchers after truth? The Bible has seen the birth, death, and burial in a forgotten grave of so many theories that have been trumpeted to the world as being exact and certain truth, that it does seem as if scientific men would learn modesty, at least in presuming that their discoveries are to upset the Word of God. But it may be too much to expect.

The Bible does not teach science. But it does not contradict science. And in many instances it will be found that, even though indirectly because it is not a scientific treatise, yet just so much the more strongly, the Bible corroborates what men have learned—not theorized—from the book of nature. Thus in the case before us. It is settled on a firm scientific basis that we cannot any longer hold to the Plutonic origin of the pri-

*Am. Presb. Review, April, 1869. Art. I. Recent Discoveries in Geology. By Rev. Robert Patterson, D.D., Chicago, Ill.

mary rocks; that they are rather Neptunic. Very well. Now the Scripture statement, as interpreted twenty centuries ago by the Hebrews themselves, was that there was first an instantaneous creation:—"In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." Then followed a chaotic period of indefinite extent, "development under the wings of the brooding Spirit," the period of sedimentary formations:—"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Then came at last the creation of man "to dwell on the face of the earth." Modern science, after all its pretensions, has only just reached what the Bible in a completely incidental way, and with no aim at scientific statement, taught, lo, these many centuries ago! And yet the Bible is a collection of mere myths, and modern science speaks with "authority." Away with such nonsense.

New theories will doubtless come up, and be heralded as knocking away the foundations of the Word of life. But Christians need not fear. As the author of the essay we have made our text very finely says: "God's anvil has worn out many a hammer." Let science investigate as far as she will. She will learn the exact truth in time. In the meantime Revelation shines as a light in a dark place. It exhibits that truth of righteousness which men must know for their eternal well being, whether they understand nature or not. From it shines that beaming sun which drowns in its effulgence all lesser lights, and fills the whole universe with the glory of redeeming grace.

MARYVILLE COLLEGE, E. TENN.

Our somewhat scanty library has recently been replenished by the gift of the private library of the late Rev. Thompson Bird, of Des Moines, Iowa. The far West is not the quarter from which to expect such gifts, but they are not, on that account, the less valuable. Before the war, the library of Maryville College comprised about 5,000 volumes, many of them rare and valuable books. Of this number not 1,000 remained at the close of the war. They had been scattered by the armies to the four winds, never to be gathered up again. These books had been gathered into Maryville College during the long Presidency, and by the patient labors of its founder, the Rev. Isaac Anderson, D. D. In the books he was always careful to write the names of the donors. In looking through the library years ago, I was struck with the fact that a large number of these books came from New England, and among the donors were some of her most distinguished names,—such as Emmons, Hopkins, Bellamy, Appleton, Lawrence, &c., &c.

It would seem that war, in its desolating march, might spare public libraries, but destruction being its grand mission, it neither venerates the past nor cares for the future.

The library of the Rev. Thompson Bird contains about 1,000 volumes, worth at least, \$1,500. It is a very valuable and much needed acquisition—the largest gift of books ever received from any one man. When Bro. Bird first notified me of his purpose to donate his library to Maryville College, I had doubts in my mind, as to whether a pioneer minister in the distant West was likely to be in possession of a library worth freighting from Des Moines to Maryville. But during a brief visit to Des Moines last summer, these doubts were dispelled. I was agreeably surprised to find a library so large and well selected. In it abound standard theological, historical, and classical works; also valuable works on Biblical exegesis, sacred geography and chronology, and many miscellaneous works of rare merit. *May this be neither the last nor the largest gift of the kind to Maryville College!*

I found Brother Bird lying on a sofa-chair, entirely helpless, and with difficulty speaking so as to be understood by a stranger. He expressed a feeling of deep interest in Maryville College, was thoroughly acquainted with its history and struggles in the past, and hoped for it a useful and prosperous future. In the bestowment of his library, he was decided by that feature of the College, which excludes none from its privileges by reason of race or color, and remarked very emphatically, that in case persons were ever excluded from the College on account of color or race, he wanted these books sent back to Des Moines.

He requested me to carry back the following messages to the young men of Maryville College, preparing for the ministry:

1. Tell them for me, "Be place-makers, not place-seekers." His mind seemed to be burdened with the thought that some of our young men are far more anxious to get into good places already prepared by others, than to make good places for themselves. Is this not sound advice for all young men looking to the ministry? Hard work not only makes a good place, but prepares a man to take care of, enjoy, and hold it.

2. Say to them for me, "When you settle among a people, let them understand by your conduct, that you have come among them for their spiritual good,—that the great object of your mission and labor among them, is their salvation, and you need not fear, but that God will sustain you."

I was with Bro. Bird but a short time. His sufferings were great, but his patience and resignation were equally great. Among the last words I heard from his palsied tongue were, "O how I long to be delivered from the body of this death!" Deliverance has at length come, and he now rests, in the mansions above, from his labors and sufferings.

T. J. LAMAR.

Maryville, Tenn., May 10, 1869.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF OUR AGE.

Abiding here for a day or two, and seeing the notice that an address would be delivered before the Alumni of the Rochester Theological Seminary (Baptist) last evening, by Rev. Dr. J. H. Castle of Philadelphia, I dropped in expecting something worth hearing. It was all that, and more—worth mentioning.

He began with a reference to a recent book, "*Primitive Piety Revived*," the work of an earnest Christian man who wrote at the call of a fellow-Christian whose soul is in strife to set in work every available agency to lift the Church up into higher consecration and efficiency. But the book, with all its noble and stirring sentiments, bears on its title, a view of the power of the gospel as historically developed, which is gloomy to the minister, and which is not only discouraging, but false.

He spoke also of several classes whose views, if they are to be adopted, can have no other effect than to make ministers feel that theirs is a comparatively hopeless work, and if hopeless, how hard to prevent it from becoming heartless. There is the whole tribe of veneration of antiquity, men always dwelling on the Christianity of the past only to disparage that of the present; there are the Second Adventists, on the watch for all the "worse and worse" features of the age, to build thereon their faith that the day for the new heavens and earth is at hand; and there is the infidel's boast that the evangelism of the gospel will soon be engulfed in a philosophized Christianity. These classes, widely variant as their spirit and aims are, conspire to foster the notion that the life and influence of Christianity are really dying out from the world.

The proposition of the address braced itself against any such view of the Christianity of our age, assuring ministers that they are not to feel themselves as preaching a gospel which is losing its power for reforming and redeeming the world, but which, on the other hand, whether regarded in respect to its life in the individual, or its influence over society at large, is far in advance of the apostolical and early ages of the Church. The view was carried through three points of comparison. The New Testament and early Church histories justify no call for the revival of primitive piety, so far as *Personal Holiness* is concerned. Taking the Church in the mass, it would be retrogression. Glowing individual examples there were; possibly holier men than have arisen since—men like Stephen, Paul, and many others, apostles and people, whose lives and labors spoke the power of the cross. But read the honest record concerning the people of the churches, as for example in Corinth, or the Asiatic churches, their carnalities, their heresies, their scandalous living, their shielding of foul immoralities by church discipline, and it presents a condition as regards holy living which Christians of this age have risen far above, and which no one can wish to see restored.

The same view holds in the point of the *Purity of Faith and Unity of the Spirit*. The heresies in the early Church, even back in New Testament times, were as atrocious as any with which "we now contend." They soon became more in number, and were built on more trivial points and hair-splitting philosophies. Religious controversies were more fierce, and the idea of giving breadth of opin-

ion within certain defined limits, was pretty much unknown.

In *Benevolent Activities* the movements of the primitive Church bear no comparison with our own. Your readers can easily imagine the abundance of material which was on hand to illustrate this, and those who know the speaker need not be told of the grace and skill with which it was made tributary to the final conclusion that the primitive condition of the Christian Church, as it regards either faith or personal piety, is the last of all things for present aspiration; that Christianity is not fallen below its infancy, but has grown into vigorous childhood, and is growing up to valiant maturity.

Ministers should feel the rousing influence of the fact that they labor in a gospel which is not losing its strength, but is becoming as never before, a power in men, in churches, in nations, in everything connected with human good.

Its beginning was but the starting out of its mission of human regeneration. The early imperfections, scandals, heresies, and conflicts in the Church were but the experiences through which holiness, truth, unity and consecration were, under the Spirit, to work their way up into wholeness. Partial as has been the progress, it still is process, and will still be until progress comes to its pause in consummation. B. B. H.

ROCHESTER, May 12, 1869.

TEMPERANCE ITEMS.

Mr. J. G. Holland ("Timothy Titcomb") has been writing from France, Italy, and Switzerland upon the prevalence of intemperance in those countries, in spite of the abundance of cheap wines, which, many insist, do and will abate the evil. His statements having been called in question, he reiterates them, as follows:

"You request me to give the result of my observation of the effects of the white wines of the Canton of Vaud upon the people. In complying, I have to say that *I have seen more drunkenness here than in any country I have visited, not even excepting England and the United States.* All with whom I have conversed, among the most intelligent of the inhabitants, have united in deploring its prevalence. There is, however, this difference in its effect from that produced by stronger liquors: The people are not rendered so violent; indeed, I do not remember ever to have seen any violence or quarrelling in their cups. They are either made stupid or musical. Apparently there is less drunkenness in Italy than in France, and less in France than in Switzerland; but there is drunkenness wherever in the world there is the article to get drunk upon. I have not yet found the place where cheap wine has seemed to work the cure of intemperance."

—A recent traveller says that, taking a walk one day through the commissariat stores in Hong Kong, with a friend, he came to a portion of that establishment where four Chinamen were engaged in emptying a large tub of rum, which they were carrying in gallon measures to another portion of the building. Addressing himself to one who was apparently the head of the party, he inquired: "Do you like rum, John?" "No, sir," said the Chinaman. "Why not?" "Rum not proper, sir; make Chinaman number one fool."

—The Old South church at Worcester has recently adopted, unanimously, the following resolutions:

Resolved, That a Christian church cannot reasonably expect God's blessing while it ignores the temperance cause.

Resolved, That the manufacture, sale, or use of ale, porter, strong beer, lager beer, cider, wines, or intoxicating liquor of any kind as a beverage is unchristian, and cannot fail to bring reproach to our Zion.

—A story is circulating among the Indian and China papers that the young Emperor of China, being curious to judge for himself the effect of opium, tried a pipe, and, of course, suffered severely. The Queen Mother made inquiries, and, having found out that one of the chief eunuchs had supplied His Majesty with the opium, had him beheaded, as an example to the rest of the household, and a fresh proclamation against the use of the drug was sent through the Empire. The Chinese are old-time prohibitionists, and their salutary laws against opium eating have been nullified by so-called Christian nations.

—The O. S. Presbytery of Saltzburg recently *Resolved*, That it is the expression of this Presbytery that total abstinence from all alcoholic liquors, as a beverage, should be a pre-requisite to full membership in the church, and what is commonly known as "temperate drinking" should be made a subject of discipline, and that the pastors and Sessions of the several churches within the bounds of this Presbytery are hereby exhorted to be faithful in the carrying out of the spirit of this resolution.

—Exercise and temperance are God's medicines, and they have this great advantage over all others; that while they promote health and long life, they do not promote for all who put trust in them the means of independence.